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EXAMINER
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HSU, JONI

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2628

DATE MAILED: 03/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/898,699	<b>Applicant(s)</b> LEE ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Joni Hsu	<b>Art Unit</b> 2671	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-12,14,15,17,18,20 and 24-27 is/are pending in the application.  
     4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-12,14,15,17,18,20 and 24-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
     a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>12/29/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

1. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on December 29, 2005 was filed after the mailing date of the application on July 2, 2001. The submission is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

### ***Response to Amendment***

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 24-27 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

3. Applicant's arguments, see pages 8-9, filed October 26, 2005, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and claims 3, 6-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Deering (US005544306A).

4. Applicant argues that Moon (US005758045A) fails to show or teach a compare circuit having a line connected to a memory cell array (page 8).

In reply, the Examiner agrees. However, new grounds of rejection are made in view of Deering.

*Claim Objections*

5. Claim 4 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form.

*Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1 and 24-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Deering (US005544306A).

8. With regard to Claim 1, Deering describes a memory device (71, Figure 1) for use with a memory controller (70; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 1), the memory device comprising a memory cell array (56, Figure 2; Col. 7, lines 27-30) adapted to store internal depth data of an object (Col. 8, lines 30-34; Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 16, lines 60-62); a compare circuit (235, Figure 8; Col. 15, lines 56-61); a line (202, Figure 2) connecting the compare circuit to the memory cell array (Col. 15, lines 11-13; Col. 7, line 65-Col. 8, line 5); and a data modifying circuit (58) distinct

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from the memory controller, the data modifying circuit including the compare circuit (Col. 15, lines 11-13) and being adapted to receive corresponding new external depth data of the object from the memory controller (Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 16, lines 62-67; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 1), compare the new external depth data with the internal depth data (Col. 15, lines 56-61), and write the external depth data, via the connecting line, into the memory cell array over the internal depth data depending on the result of the comparison, and output to the memory controller a status signal (*provides the compare result 240 which is transferred over the interleaved rendering bus 64 as the PA\_PASS\_OUT signal, writing of the write port data 202 into the pixel buffer 56*, Col. 17, lines 1-10; *The rendering controller 70 performs data accesses to and from the FBRAM chips 71-82 over a rendering bus 98. The rendering bus 98 comprises a set of interleaved buses 64-67 that enable independent control and access to each interleave portion of the graphics subsystem 86*, Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 4; Col. 6, lines 53-62).

9. With regard to Claim 24, Deering describes a first control pin (PA\_PASS\_IN, PA\_PASS\_OUT, 178, Figure 8) that directly connects the compare circuit (235) to the memory controller (70, Figure 1; Col. 16, lines 39-42; Col. 17, lines 1-10; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 4, Col. 6, lines 53-62), as shown in Figure 8.

10. With regard to Claim 25, Deering describes that the first control pin is adapted to receive a first control signal (PA\_PASS\_IN) from the memory controller (70, Figure 1) and to output a first status signal (PA\_PASS\_OUT) to the memory controller (Col. 17, lines 1-10; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 4, Col. 6, lines 53-62), as shown in Figure 8.

11. With regard to Claim 26, Deering describes a second control pin that directly connects the compare circuit (58, Figure 4; Col. 8, lines 30-34) to the memory controller (70, Figure 1; Col. 6, lines 53-62; Col. 11, lines 8-15), as shown in Figure 4.

12. With regard to Claim 27, Deering describes that the second control pin is adapted to receive a second control signal from the memory controller (70, Figure 1) and to output a second status signal to the memory controller (Col. 6, lines 53-62; Col. 11, lines 8-15), as shown in Figure 4.

13. Thus, it reasonably appears that Deering describes or discloses every element of Claims 1 and 24-27 and therefore anticipates the claims subject.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

15. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

16. Claims 3-15, 17, 18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Deering (US005544306A) in view of Dowdell (US005301263A).

17. With regard to Claim 3, Deering is relied upon for the teachings as discussed above relative to Claim 1. Deering discloses a first control pin for receiving a first control signal from the memory controller (70, Figure 1; PA\_PASS\_IN signal, Col. 15, lines 56-61; *transferred over the interleaved rendering bus 64, PA\_PASS\_IN*, Col. 17, lines 2-10; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 4; Col. 6, lines 53-62), as shown in Figure 10; and a control circuit for transmitting the external depth data to the memory cell array (56, Figure 2; Col. 8, lines 30-34; Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 16, lines 62-67).

However, Deering does not teach bypassing the data modifying circuit depending upon a state of the first control signal (81E, Figure 9). The specification describes bypassing the data modifying circuit depending as an instant where depth compare writing is not going to occur (if the first control signal CS1 is in a non-active state,...data NWT is output...for normal writing, Specification page 5, lines 9-21). Dowdell discloses similar process as follows in that an incoming z-buffer address, new z-value are given as an entry into FIFO 102. Controller 112 has

to act on the incoming pixel address to update the new z-value, if necessary. Dowdell makes use of an INVALID bit to validate a new z-value to be written to memory (Col. 4, lines 3-67). The most significant, middle significant, and least significant bytes of the old 24 bit z-values, R1, R2 and R3 and corresponding bytes of the new 24 bit z-value denoted by W1, W2 and W3 and a comparison is performed between R1 and W1 and if  $R1 > W1$ , as determined by the comparator 114, Figure 2, then it is determined the entire 24 bit old z-value is greater than the entire 24 bit new z-value and consequently the entire 24 bit new z-value consisting of W1, W2 and W3 must be written to memory 124; however, if  $R1 \leq W1$ , then the old 24 bit z-value is less than the new 24 bit z-value, indicating that the new value should not be written to memory and in this case, the updating operation is terminated immediately. Other comparisons between R2-W2; R3-W3 are detailed and termination of updating operation is detailed based on the comparisons (Col. 4, lines 45-67; Col. 5, lines 1-55). Thus INVALID bit state is the signal which then determines bypassing of the update operations.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by applicant to modify the device of Deering to include bypassing the data modifying circuit depending upon a state of the first control signal as suggested by Dowdell because it results in conserving computing resources as no comparison has to take place.

18. With regard to Claim 4, Claim 4 recites the memory device of Claim 1, wherein the data modifying circuit is further adapted to output to the memory controller a status signal, and is not further limiting of the parent independent Claim 1. Therefore, Claim 4 is rejected under the same rationale.



19. With regard to Claim 5, Deering discloses that the status signal is output through the first control pin (*transferred over the interleaved rendering bus 64 as the PA\_PASS\_OUT signal*, Col. 17, lines 3-5), as shown in Figure 10.

20. With regard to Claims 6 and 7, Deering does not teach a register explicitly for the purpose of storing the received new external depth data. However, Dowdell's invention discloses in Figure 1 a three-step updating operation (i.e., read, compare, write) for a given pixel and a compare circuit (equal comparator 112, greater than comparator 114, Figure 1, Dowdell).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by applicant to modify the device of Deering to include a register explicitly for the purpose of storing the received new external depth data as suggested by Dowdell because it provides for efficient data processing as z values are updated only if they are determined to be updated and unnecessary processing steps are eliminated resulting in processing efficiencies.

21. With regard to Claim 8, Deering describes that the compare circuit (235, Figure 8; Col. 16, lines 48-42) is further adapted to output a status signal to the memory controller (70, Figure 1; Col. 17, lines 1-5; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 4; Col. 6, lines 53-62).

22. With regard to Claims 9-11, Deering is silent about wherein the compare circuit compares the internal depth data with the stored external depth in units of X bits/NX bits when the second control signal is in a non-active/active state. However, Dowdell discloses making use

of an INVALID bit that indicates for a particular pixel whether or not the corresponding z-value memory location has a valid z-value stored in it, with a value of '0' indicating that it does and a value of '1' indicating that it does not. Further, Dowdell discloses most significant, middle significant and least significant bytes of old z-value and new z-value being compared, and this it does not by processing all bits at once. Figure the MSB are compared, then middle significant and then least significant bytes and avoids unnecessary processing using this logic (Col. 4, lines 40-67; Col. 5, lines 1-55) and INVALID bit (value 0 indicating that it does...value 1 indicating it does not, Col. 4, lines 3-10), providing a valid status for a z-value at a particular memory location.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by applicant to modify the device of Deering so that the compare circuit compares the internal depth data with the stored external depth in units of X bits/NX bits when the second control signal is in a non-active/active state as suggested by Dowdell because it results in efficient processing of z-values in the comparator circuit.

23. With regard to Claim 12 and 17, Deering describes a method of processing depth data of an object (Col. 8, lines 32-34) in a memory device (71, Figure 1) controlled by a memory controller (70; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 1), the method comprising receiving external depth data of the object from the memory controller (Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 16, lines 62-66; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6, line 1); storing the received external depth data (Col. 8, lines 30-34); receiving a first control signal from the memory controller through a first control pin distinct from the memory controller (PA\_PASS\_IN, Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 17, lines 3-7; Col. 5, line 66-Col. 6,

line 4; Col. 6, lines 53-62), as shown in Figure 10; receiving the stored external depth data and corresponding internal depth data stored in the memory cell array (56, Figure 2) at a compare circuit (235, Figure 8; Col. 15, lines 11-13; Col. 15, lines 56-61; Col. 16, lines 60-62) that is distinct from the memory controller and connected via a line (202, Figure 2) to the memory cell array (Col. 7, line 65-Col. 8, line 9; Col. 8, lines 30-34) comparing, the received data, writing from the compare circuit, via the connected line, the external depth data over the corresponding internal depth data into the memory cell array depending on the result of the comparison (Col. 17, lines 1-10); and receiving a second control signal from the memory controller through a second control pin distinct from the memory controller (Col. 6, lines 53-62), as shown in Figure 4.

However, Deering does not disclose determining a state of the control signal whether active or inactive and comparing the internal/external depth data in units of X/NX bits; and outputting a status signal indicating that the NX bits of the internal depth have been modified. However, Dowdell discloses an INVALID bit which is similar to the control signal with active or inactive states, in that INVALID bit for a particular pixel indicates whether or not the corresponding z-value memory location has a valid z-values stored in it. Dowdell does the 24 bit bits processing for comparing not at once, instead it does so based on MSB-LSB comparison thus avoiding unnecessary comparison steps (Col. 4, lines 5-67; Col. 5, lines 1-55). Dowdell does the reporting of comparison bits and their modification, if carried out, as indicated by “done” state of Figure 2.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention by applicant to modify the device of Deering to include determining a state of the control signal

whether active or inactive and comparing the internal/external depth data in units of X/NX bits; and outputting a status signal indicating that the NX bits of the internal depth have been modified as suggested by Dowdell because it provides a more efficient z-value comparison logic.

24. With regard to Claim 14, Claim 14 is similar in scope to Claim 7, and therefore is rejected under the same rationale.

25. With regard to Claim 15, Deering does not teach that writing the external depth data takes place if the comparison yields that the external depth data is larger than the internal depth data. However, Dowdell discloses bytes R1, R2, and R3 of the old z-values and W1, W2, and W3 of the new z-values (Col. 4, lines 45-50) and a comparison is performed between R1 and W1 and if  $R1 > W1$ , then it is determined that the old z-value is greater than the new z-value and consequently the new z-value is written to memory 124 (Col. 5, lines 5-10). This would be obvious for the same reasons given in the rejection for Claim 3.

26. With regard to Claims 18 and 20, they are similar in scope to Claim 5 above and rejected under the same rationale.

### *Conclusion*

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. U.S. Patent No. 3,955,177 to Miller.

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joni Hsu whose telephone number is 571-272-7785. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ulka Chauhan can be reached on 571-272-7782. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JH

  
ULKA CHAUHAN  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

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Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).